

they have also donated supplies to refugee students affected by the war in the Balkans in Kosovo. The "Drive for Supplies" program truly has the ability to reach thousands of students across the world.

Beginning with Maryland and the Mid-Atlantic Region, Learn Shop hopes to expand the program around the nation, in hopes of reducing poverty nationally and helping children in need. I applaud the efforts of Learn Shop and encourage them to continue all the work that is greatly needed in our communities.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 2, 2000

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform the House about my leave of absence from March 21 through March 24 of this year. I was out of the country on official business. Accordingly, I was unable to cast any votes.

If present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote No. 75, H. Con. Res. 290, the Budget Resolution for FY 2001.

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 74, on agreeing to the Spratt amendment to H. Con. Res. 290.

"No" on rollcall vote No. 73, on agreeing to the Sununu amendment to H. Con. Res. 290.

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 72, on agreeing to the Stenholm amendment to H. Con. Res. 290.

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 71, on agreeing to the DeFazio amendment to H. Con. Res. 290.

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 70, on agreeing to the Owens amendment to H. Con. Res. 290.

"No" on rollcall vote No. 69, on a motion that the Committee rise to H. Con. Res. 290.

"No" on rollcall vote No. 68, providing for consideration of H. Con. Res. 290, establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for FY 2001.

"No" on rollcall vote No. 67, providing for consideration of H. Con. Res. 290, establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for FY 2001.

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 66, on approving the Journal.

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 65, on passage of H.R. 3822, the Oil Price Reduction Act of 2000.

"No" on rollcall vote No. 64, providing for consideration of H.R. 3822, the Oil Price Reduction Act of 2000.

"No" on rollcall vote No. 63, on passage to S. 1287, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000.

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 62, to commit with instructions S. 1287, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000.

"No" on rollcall vote No. 61, whether the House will consider S. 1287, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000.

"No" on rollcall vote No. 60, providing for consideration of S. 1287, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000 (H. Res. 444).

"No" on rollcall vote No. 59, providing for consideration of S. 1287, the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act (H. Res. 444).

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 58, on approving the Journal.

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 57, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that

the National Park Service should take full advantage of support services offered by the Department of Defense (H. Res. 182).

TRIBUTE TO DYLAN GEORGE MOHAN

HON. JAMES M. TALENT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 2, 2000

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the May 16, 2000, birth of Dylan George Mohan. Dylan was born at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, DC, at 8:56 p.m. He is the son of Kristin Young and Matthew Mohan. Dylan is the first grandson of his grandparent George and Phyllis Young and grandparents Jim and Mary Mohan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in congratulating this new family and to wish Dylan much joy and happiness in the years to come.

HONORING REV. CURTIS COFIELD II, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 2, 2000

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to join the Immanuel Baptist Church and the New Haven community in paying tribute to my dear friend and an outstanding member of the New Haven, CT, community—Rev. Curtis Cofield. As a pastor and community leader, Reverend Cofield has dedicated his life to making a real difference in the lives of the residents of Greater New Haven.

The clergy has always played a vital role in our community and Reverend Cofield is a sterling example. His commitment to the service of our community through religious leadership is admired by many and rivaled by few. His involvement, not only with the congregation of the Immanuel Baptist Church, but with the entire community, has had a tremendous impact on many lives, especially those who face arduous struggles and frustrating situations in their daily lives. Working with his wife Elsie and the AIDS Interfaith Network, Reverend Cofield has helped hundreds of individuals and their families cope with the devastating effects caused by this terrible illness. For years, he has ministered to the spiritual needs of countless people in the New Haven community—strengthening the bonds of faith and helping to build stronger neighborhoods of which we can all be proud.

Throughout his decades of service to the New Haven community, Reverend Cofield has been a leading advocate for some of our country's most vulnerable citizens. He has served as a strong voice for their best interests. As a member of over 30 service and religious organizations throughout his career, he has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to ensuring that his actions and participation enriched his community. I have always held a deep admiration for community service and those who provide it. With his extraordinary record of service, Reverend Cofield serves as an example to all that one person really can make a difference.

As the first African-American chairman of the Connecticut State Freedom of Information Commission, organizing founder of the Dwight Neighborhood Corporation, and as a pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church, Reverend Cofield has enriched the lives of residents in New Haven and across the State of Connecticut. His dedication has been recognized locally, nationally, and internationally. The myriad awards and honors that adorn his walls are testimony to his unparalleled commitment and dedication.

It is with great pride that I stand today to join Elsie, his children, family, friends, and the entire New Haven community to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to Reverend Curtis Cofield for all of the good work he has done. As a pastor, community leader, and friend, he has touched the lives of thousands and leaves a legacy of dedication and inspiration second to none.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 2, 2000

Ms. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my support for H.J. Res. 123. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, I stayed in Washington until the last possible moment, hoping that Congress could finish the business of the people of the Central Coast and all Americans. There are critical unresolved issues still on the table—including school modernization, common-sense tax relief, and adequate funding for Medicare.

I am deeply dismayed that the Congressional leadership has decided to push these issues off to a lame duck session. The American people deserve better.

LAOTIAN-AMERICANS FROM PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND PARTICIPATION IN U.S. CONGRESSIONAL FORUM ON LAOS

SPEECH OF

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 1, 2000

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents from Rhode Island recently participated in a U.S. Congressional Forum on Laos held on October 19. Laotian and Hmong leaders from around the United States and the globe gathered to present testimony to policymakers and Members of Congress. They joined in a special ceremony in Congress to honor former Congressman Bruce Vento, who recently passed away, for his leadership role on behalf of the freedom-loving for the people of Laos.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent a significant Laotian and Hmong-American population in Rhode Island. I share their deep concern about their relatives and countrymen still in Laos—and the need for human rights and democracy. My uncle, President Kennedy, also believed strongly in freedom for the people of Laos, and committed the United States to that goal. I am honored to continue that

fight in the United States Congress today, and firmly believe that forums like this are an excellent way to work toward that goal. I also appreciate their efforts to honor my colleague, former congressman Bruce Vento, for his work on behalf of freedom and human rights for Laotian people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. Thongsavanh Phongsavan, of the Lao Representatives Abroad Council, based in Providence, Rhode Island, for his important work in the Laotian community. I am grateful that Laotian students from Rhode Island played a leadership role in the event, including Mr. Thongkhoun Pathana, Ms. Viengsavanh Changhavong, Ms. Sotthida Bounthapanya, and Ms. Ammala Douangsavan. Many Hmong-Americans also attended from Providence including Mr. Xay Ge Kue, Mr. Xia Xue Kue, Mr. Toua Kue, and Mr. Nhia Sue Yang. I also want to thank Mr. Philip Smith, Executive Director for the Center for Public Policy Analysis, for helping to convene this important forum. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and many other important organizations were able to speak and participate with regard to the ongoing need to promote human rights and democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I would commend my colleagues in Congress the following testimony of Mr. Thongsavanh Phongsavan from the Lao Representatives Abroad Council:

Thank you Mr. Philip Smith, Honorable Congressman, Honorable Senator, Your Excellency, and Distinguished Guests:

On behalf of the Laotian Representatives Abroad Council I am deeply encouraged by the promise that this historic U.S. Congressional Forum VI hold for the future. With the wisdom of our Laotian Leaders, this new era of co-operation will inspire peace and prosperity for many generations to follow. This new age will also give rise to opportunities for our peoples unimaginable only a short while ago. In the eyes of industrialized nations, no longer will we be viewed as a group of ethnicities closed and divided, but as a model of the tremendous progress that freedom, democracy and free enterprises can achieve in the Laos.

Now more than ever, we need to work together to secure this vision of hope. At this point there can be no turning back; only the swift and purposeful push towards a more productive future. Indeed, the Twenty-First Century is our oasis in the desert. It is a place where Laotian people and ideas will come together for the betterment of all of Humanity, Respect and justice to all.

Laotian Representatives Abroad Council and Lao Progressive and their emissaries have been hard at work to help bring these new developments into focus. Working not only with the Laotian people, but with peoples of all ethnicities, it has achieved tremendous economic opportunity through the expansion of business development, job opportunity, education, social orientation, and political consultations.

For more than 30 generations, the people of Laos and their leaders have stood proud despite the winds of social burden. The history of our nation runs deep and wide. And from the beginning, its many political, social and economic struggles have been overcome in the name of freedom, democracy and prosperity.

With French colonization late in the last century and the sociopolitical breakdowns that followed, Laos 65 ethnic groups were divided by pressure from within and without—as other, developing nations, aspired to progress. Men, women and children bound by

a common vision of hope fought for independence. But isolated by differences of language and culture within their own borders, their collective strength was diminished.

The ensuing years provided few signs of relief. Relations among the struggling classes and the French remained tenuous at best. And despite the growing numbers of young Laotian being educated in French universities by the 1920's higher education was yet restricted to all but Laos' social elite.

Lack of education and poor agriculture imbued further hardships for both the people and the land. The colonist, indifferent to the idea of investing in the masses through improved social opportunity, employed unskilled labor in mining operations; the harsh conditions of which caused many workers to perish. Times grew much worse for the rural and uneducated people. And without a means of unifying their philosophies, de Gaulle and other leaders could place little hope on maintaining Laos' status quo as a French colony.

Lao History in its later chapters is plagued by struggles of even greater intensity. Prolonged war ensued between the Pathet Lao and the Royal government. And this turmoil was further compounded by the fact that government control in Vientiane passed back and forth between General Phoumi Nonsavan's pro-Western alliance, and Laos' Neutralists, which were led by Prince Souvanna Phouma.

The stunning success of the LPF and its allies in winning thirteen of the twenty-one seats contested in the May 4, 1958, elections to the National Assembly changed the political atmosphere in Vientiane. This success had less to do with the LPF's adroitness than with the ineptness of the old-line nationalists, more intent on advancing their personal interests than on meeting the challenge from the LPF. The two largest parties, the Laos Progressive Party and the Independent Party, could not agree on a list of common candidates in spite of repeated prodding by the United States embassy and so split their votes among dozens of candidates. The LPF and the Peace (Santiphab) Party carefully worked out a strategy of mutual support, which succeed in winning nearly two-thirds of the seats with barely one-third of the votes cast. Souphanouvong garnered the most votes and became chairman of the National Assembly. The Laos Progressive Party and the Independent Party tardily merged to become the Rally of the Laos People (Lao Rouam Lao).

In the wake of the election fiasco, Washington concentrated on finding alternatives to Souvanna Phouma's strategy of winning over the Pathet Lao and on building up the Royal Lao Army as the only cohesive nationalist force capable of dealing with the communists' united front tactics. On June 10, 1958, a new political grouping called the Committee for the Defense of the National Interests (CDNI) made its appearance. Formed mainly of a younger generation not tied to the big families and as yet untainted by corruption, it announced a program for revitalizing the economy, forming an anticommunist front that excluded the Pathet Lao, suppressing corruption, and creating a national mystique.

Washington which was paying the entire salary cost of the Royal Lao Army, was enthusiastic about the "young turks" of the CDNI. This enthusiasm was not altogether shared by United States ambassador Horace H. Smith, who asked what right a group untested by any election had to set its sights on cabinet appointments. Whereas Souvanna Phouma tried and failed to form a government, creating a drawn-out cabinet crisis, Phoui Sunanikone eventually succeeded and included four CDNI members and Phoumi Nonsavan in a subcabinet post.

In 1961, a 14-nation conference held in Geneva sought to defuse the conflict by establishing a neutralist coalition government under Souvanna Phouma. However, the warring factions soon clashed again. And in the increasing chaos that followed, Laos' upheaval would be viewed as merely an appendage to the Vietnam War.

The final coalition government was established in April, 1974. This entity was led by Souvanna Phouma, and included his half-brother, the Pathet Lao Leader Souphanouvong. After south Vietnam's and Cambodia's fall to Communist rule in 1975, the Pathet Lao assumed full control in Laos. In December of that year, Souvanna Phouma's government was terminated and the Royal Monarchy abolished. As many as 30,000 former government and police officials were sent to political reeducation centers. And against this great body of humanity, many serious abuses of human rights were witnessed.

After 1975 an estimated 400,000 refugees, including most of Laos' educated and wealthy elite, fled the country. Laos signed a peace accord with Vietnam in 1977, and a border delineation treaty with that country in 1986. Vietnam then agreed to provide Laos with aid to develop its agriculture, forestry, industries, and transportation facilities; and to allow duty-free access to port facilities in Da Nang. Laos' alliance with Vietnam and the former Soviet bloc was bolstered after Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea in 1979.

As the Twenty-First Century is at our hand, important changes in the Lao infrastructure are again imminent. Just as the stone age wheel precede the ox cart and wagon, each advancement we make today is an investment toward the future. Among the important changes we must not prepare for is the enactment of socio-economic reforms. Surely with a strong foundation on which to build, the framework for a better tomorrow will be achieved. In terms of Indochina's pending Globalization toward a free-market economy, a serious dialogue must now begin to assume that needed improvements in education, labor, health care and many other social issues will be squarely met.

Both high level and intermediate talks among our leaders and those of the industrialized nations will aid in this transition. Participation in such dialogue will also improve relations with our neighbors; promoting understanding, while forging a new alliance among those who embrace this long awaited opportunity.

The teaching of English as a Second Language is also a vital necessity. This advantage will not only help us fulfill the promise of unifying the people of our region, but aid in the development and expansion of commercial interests throughout the world. To achieve this result without compromising our respective traditions or values, improved teaching in all areas of study shall play a decisive role, with present advancements in education, technology and industry—Televisions, Computers and internet access in the classroom are among the chosen tools for building a better future.

Laos is also blessed with an abundance of undeveloped natural resources. Gold, Oak timber, Raw minerals, Gemstones and Hydroelectric Power are among the most substantial of its treasures. Along with the installment of valid reforms, development in farming, construction and hybrid technologies will easily bring this country's economy over the top within the next five to ten years.

Educators, students and interested members of the business and private sectors may also take an active role in this development. Individually or as part of an established group, they themselves have the power to

initiate political, economic and social reforms through positive involvement in their own land.

Specific ways in which these steps can be followed include:

1. Reading and learning about the history of Southeast Asia and its struggles.
2. Becoming involved through further sociopolitical study and debate.
3. Acquiring specific knowledge and technology in fields relation to agriculture, medicine, electronics and engineering.
4. To aid in this transition by lending your direct support to our nation and its people.

Writing or speaking with U.S. Congressmen, Senators and even the President will also help to set the wheels of progress into motion. Promoting the involvement of other nations and leaders will add credibility and support to these efforts, while establishing a dialog of wise words and encouragement that will achieve enormous benefits for this worldly cause.

Improved teaching is but one avenue to be fully explored and attended. Equally important considerations are met as we reach each new crossroad in the quest for a greater unity. Improved agriculture, communications private ownership and the recognition of minorities are just some of the prevailing elements of an economically stable system. In the context of greater struggles, political reforms and the redefinition of Civil freedoms will promote a wider approval of this cause.

Today we stand united, as the dawning of a new and enlightened age has arrived. Only with our combined efforts could such a proud and prosperous moment come to bear. And with the health and well-being of our children in our hands, together we will strive to uphold the values that will lead our people into a brighter future.

The establishment of universal reform leading to free, multi-political party elections will provide our cultures the competitive edge that is needed. This adoption of democratic systems will give our leaders not only a confident voice, but allow a greater sense of identity for our people to embrace.

Last but most important is the question of our youth. As our children come of age in the prosperous civilization that is our future, what will be the quality of their existence? With overpopulation, pollution and the twin civilians of hunger and disease. The conservation of forests, wildlife, clean air and water must not take second place to our more immediate desires—for once these diminishing resources are gone, there will be no means of replenishing them. This threatens the very core of our existence on this fragile planet, as without adequate methods to assure the protection of our natural environment, we may one day be without the life sustaining elements that we so humbly share.

The next few years 2002 will provide the test from which these hopes will be won or defeated, without the cooperation and commitment of great nations and leaders, this enormous challenge will most certainly be lost. To seize this opportunity and achieve and effective head start as the dawning of this millennium year. We must now join hands with a single vision—and with the welfare of our children in our hearts. The blueprint for a better tomorrow is already in our hands. Our social, Economic and Political struggles are being squarely met. And now, with the help of our dedicated supporters, our plea for Peace, Democracy and Freedom in finally being heard.

The ultimate realization of these goals will require the continued support of everyone who shares this vision of social and economic prosperity. It will require the active participation of people of different ideas and

ideologies to bring about such Freedom and Change. Achieving these solutions may not always be easy, but the alternatives are far less forgiving. The imprisonment, torture and eventual execution of H.R.H., King Sisavang Vathana, is but one lasting reminder of this tragic legacy.

The drive toward social reconstruction is our greatest challenge. The coming age will be the turning point from which our success or failure will be determined. In building this bridge in the 21st Century, we must be willing to follow but one voice. We must be able to look to one person who will lead us on this course, and who will speak for all who have succeeded in conquering odds that had once seemed insurmountable.

Working as a team, we will succeed together the needed resources to make this bold vision a reality. To achieve this co-operation, better means of communication among our leaders, allies and supporters must now be sought and clear.

Developing these vital links will be the first step in building a greater unity. For once a true sense of solidarity is established with our neighbors throughout this land, more ambitious roles for the Laotian people and their neighbors will begin to take shape. However, without bold intervention by the end of this year, the future of Laos as an independent nation is far less certain. With conflicting ideologies on both sides of its borders, and with its young and old gripped by the differences of age, language and culture, the Leadership's reluctance to join hands and resist oppression now threatens this best chance for Democracy and Freedom of our people.

Indeed, the key to a free and Democratic Laos may be found in the partnership of citizens young and old. While traditions live long and new ideologies are often favored over those of the past, people on both sides of the issue must come to the bargaining tables for the sake of their national sovereignty. Accomplishing this may not be an easy task, but prevailing over any struggle has never been simple. The best solution to this multi-sided issue lies with willingness of each division to set aside its differences, and to consider this new and determined plan. Laotian Representatives Abroad Council and The Lao Progressive Party will play an active role in these joint endeavors. Together, with the strong and powerful will of both our friends and former adversaries, Southeast Asia's mission to achieve free and lasting reforms will be down in history as the greatest success of the 21st Century.

The establishment of new opportunity through peaceful diplomacy will be the rising sun of our future. Working in partnership toward this common vision, we are certain that a greater understanding can and will be achieved. The point that one must realize is that these changes will not be made for the benefit of the elite few, but for the common good of our future generations.

Improved education, health and employment are all central to these efforts. So too is the introduction of multi-party elections, a unifying language and free trade. A truly free society is one based on a prosperous economy and enterprise. Our wish is to create opportunity from which our nation, her neighbors and all hard working people will universally benefit. Laotian Representatives Abroad Council and The Lao Progressive Party had demonstrated that this model of socioeconomic reform is an attainable goal. Through its efforts here in America, it has worked to foster Humanity and Progress; sparing many of thousands from great hardship through the promotion of these principles.

Your challenge, should you choose to accept it, will be to use your wisdom and expe-

rience in finding ways to develop peaceful cooperation around Asia and the World, whether you are a representative of Laos or a sensible neighbor, we must now join hands or accept the failures of our action. We must also educate our young to the old and new systems before their sense of national identity is lost. The adoption of these fundamental principals during this time of reconciliation will not only assure your country's acceptance into the United Nations, but awaken the free world to southeast Asia's immense capability and strength.

Thank you very much for allowing me this opportunity to speak with you today. I wish to express my deepest gratitude for your show of faith. It is with great confidence in you, my friends that I accept this great challenge and reaffirm my delegation's commitment of support.

TURKEY AND POSSIBLE MILITARY EQUIPMENT SALES

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 2, 2000

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the United States has a longstanding dynamic relationship with our NATO ally, the Republic of Turkey, and I believe that the strength of that relationship relies on forthright candor. I have willingly recognized positive developments in Turkey, and I have sought to present fairly the various human rights concerns as they have arisen. Today, I must bring to my colleagues' attention pending actions involving the Government of Turkey which seem incongruous with the record in violation of human rights. I fear the planned sale of additional military aircraft to Turkey could potentially have further long-term, negative effects on human rights in that country.

As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I presided over a hearing in March of 1999 that addressed many human rights concerns. The State Department had just released its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices covering 1998. Commissioner and Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Harold Hongju Koh noted in testimony before the Commission that "serious human rights abuses continued in Turkey in 1998, but we had hoped that the 1998 report would reflect significant progress on Turkey's human rights record. Prime Minister Yilmaz had publicly committed himself to making the protection of human rights his government's highest priority in 1998. We had welcomed those assurances and respected the sincerity of his intentions. We were disappointed that Turkey had not fully translated those assurances into actions."

I noted in my opening statement, "One year after a commission delegation visited Turkey, our conclusion is that there has been no demonstrable improvement in Ankara's human rights practices and that the prospects for much needed systemic reforms are bleak given the unstable political scene which is likely to continue throughout 1999."

Thankfully, eighteen months later I can say that the picture has improved—somewhat.

A little over a year ago the president of Turkey's highest court made an extraordinary speech asserting that Turkish citizens should be granted the right to speak freely, urging